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SUBJECT: RECENT DRUG-RELATED ARRESTS AND SEIZURES IN  
HONDURAS

**¶1.** Summary: Over the past weeks, Honduran authorities conducted several important drug-related arrests and seizures of assets. During the same time period, an airplane suspected of transporting drugs made an emergency landing in Honduras, but the police arrived too late to make arrests or find any drugs. All occurrences have received extensive press coverage, including print, television and radio. End Summary.

**¶2.** La Ceiba: On November 8, the Direction for the Fight Against Drug Trafficking (DLCN) arrested six people and confiscated approximately USD 300,000 in cash, 8 vehicles, 7 fishing vessels, 1 business, explosives, and weapons in an operation carried out simultaneously at approximately 15 homes and businesses in La Ceiba. The targets of the operation are presumed members of a drug trafficking and money laundering ring that operated in several areas of La Ceiba and owned seafood businesses in addition to other enterprises. The investigation continues.

**¶3.** Puerto Cortes: On November 24, the DLCN arrested three people for drug trafficking and money laundering in Puerto Cortes. The DLCN confiscated about 16 grams of cocaine ready to be consumed, plus another 12 ounces of cocaine and a pound of marijuana, as well as digital scales, two firearms, cell phones, vehicles, and Honduran and Guatemalan currency.

**¶4.** Tegucigalpa: On November 24, members of the counter-narcotics department of the Direction of Criminal Investigation (DGIC) arrested a man they caught with 15 pounds of marijuana hidden throughout his house, including in a tunnel underneath a patio. The DGIC also confiscated cash and marijuana plants.

**¶5.** Roatan: On November 29, the Preventive Police arrested ten suspects for drug trafficking and illicit association on the island of Roatan. Of the ten, one was the head of DGIC in Roatan and another was a DGIC agent. The police confiscated three kg of cocaine, cell phones, weapons and counterfeit bills. The civilians were charged with drug trafficking, and the DGIC agents were charged as accessories after the fact, and for counterfeiting dollars and local currency. On December 11, the press reported that a judge released all ten suspects. (Comment: On December 12, PolOff met with the Director General of the DGIC, who said that he is going to fire the two agents. End Comment.)

**¶6.** Isletas, Colon: On November 30, a small plane registered in Venezuela made an emergency landing on a Standard Fruit plantation private airstrip. By the time the police arrived, approximately two hours later, the plane was empty and the pilots and any other passengers were gone. The plane had no passenger seats and the police calculate that it had the capacity to transport 3,000 kg of cocaine. The airplane is now with the Public Ministry's Office of Confiscated Assets (OABI).

**¶7.** La Entrada, Copan: On December 11, the Direction of

Special Investigation Services (DGSEI) and the Frontier Police confiscated 28 kg of cocaine from an SUV driven by two Nicaraguan citizens, who were arrested. According to the press, they are accused of drug trafficking and possession and will be deported to Nicaragua.

¶8. Comment: While the arrests and seizures and their coverage in the press are positive advances in the fight against drug trafficking, many times these efforts become frustrated as drug traffickers are released from prison and their cases dismissed based on technicalities. Corruption and inefficiency among the police, prosecutors and judges continue to be serious problems in Honduras. End comment.

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